

BIKE

UTAH

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Fording the slickrock of Bartlett Wash near Moab

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Slickrock actually grips the tires like sandpaper (on the left, that's Utah Governor Jon Huntsman!)



Alpine splendor of Little Cottonwood's Albion Basin, Salt Lake



One of many killer overlooks at Canyonlands National Park



Cruising Antelope Island with downtown Salt Lake visible across the Great Salt Lake

Utah has been blessed with a diversity of single-track and off-road adventure unequalled anywhere in the world. From pristine alpine trails a stone's throw from our urban centers, to the red rock biking "Mecca" of Moab, the view from the handlebars will always be...spectacular!

- It is argued that Moab's Slickrock Trail is the most popular mountain bike trail in the world, boasting over 100,000 visitors per year!
- Brian Head resort was voted "one of the best, unique and most unusual mountain bike vacation resorts" by *Mountain Bike Action Magazine*.

If you ride, you've already heard of Moab. Like a scene from the Holy Land, riders are rewarded with slickrock mesas, deep gorges and canyons, wind-carved arches and narrow bridges that seem to come from nowhere. The land of standing rock, or Toomp'in wunear Tuweap in Navajo, is famous for its slickrock formations where massive beds of sandstone have been carved into mazes, pillars, plateaus and canyons.

Maybe you're looking for mountain trails within 10 minutes of Salt Lake City and the Wasatch Front. Utah's population hub of 2 million inhabitants also plays host to much of the best mountain biking in the state, but the opportunities extend far beyond the calf-burning mountain climbs of the adjacent Wasatch and Uinta mountain ranges.

This piece outlines some of the top trails in the state (with some editorial license taken). But for more information and detailed trail maps, browse the site below and plot your mountain biking excursions in Utah!

Northern Utah's Mountainlands

Albion Basin, at 9,000 feet, follows 2-mile Albion Basin Road from the base of Alta Ski Area. In late July/early August catch the wildflower profusion this ride is famous for. For cross-training, lash your bike and hike the mile-long trail to Cecret glacial lake, or up Catherine's pass for stunning views of the Upper Cottonwood canyons.

Antelope Island: Park at the state park entrance in Syracuse and bike the 7-mile paved causeway through the heart of the Great Salt Lake out to the island and explore the many developed trails. Enjoy cliffside views of the craggy lakeshore below, or scan the expanse of inland sea for views of downtown SLC 25 miles distant.

Beaver Creek Trail: Six miles east of Kamas on the Mirror Lake Highway/UT 150, this 9-mile out-and-back trail is a rambling ride through fragrant forests and alongside a beaver-inhabited stream.

Dowd Mountain: This 10-mile loop is a fine introduction to the Flaming Gorge Reservoir area and is ideal for novice to intermediate bikers. The undaunting loop passes through woodlands populated with mighty ponderosa and slender lodgepole pines and clips the edge of cliffs that drop 1,700 feet to the reservoir's emerald pool. In the distance, the Uinta Mountain's forested slopes rise to lofty elevations and Wyoming's prairie lands sprawl to the horizon.

Emigration Canyon is a locals' favorite. The canyon's moderate 8-mile grade, scenic attractions, historical significance, and convenient location next to Salt Lake City make it perfect for a casual day tour or a routine training ride.

Jordan River Parkway trail dissects Salt Lake and Utah Counties east to west. Features include developed and native trail segments along the 50-mile river connecting the freshwater Utah Lake with its better known saltwater counterpart to the north.

King Road to Shadow Lake Road takes you from Park City's Historic Main Street to the haunting remains of the once prosperous Silver King Mine. Then, you cross Park City Mountain Resort's aspen-bound ski slopes, and rise to viewpoints of spacious valleys surrounding the town far below. You can start this 10-mile, intermediate-to-advanced ride from anywhere in Park City by first pedaling up Main Street then up paved King Road.

The **Mueller Park Trail**, 13 miles out-and-back, is perfect for intermediate bikers and epitomizes the metro-to-mountains transition for which the Wasatch Front is famed. Beginning in the foothills of Bountiful, within minutes the nearby suburban Salt Lake jungle is

transformed into a tranquil backcountry ecosystem. From selected locations, there are good views of the Great Salt Lake and the metropolitan valley far below. And to top it off, the constantly turning single-track trail is one of finest in the Wasatch

Park City Area: Rated by *Mtn. Bike Action* as one of the ten best mountain destinations, Deer Valley Resort has over 50 miles of panoramic single and double track trails. Park City Mountain Resort offers 32-plus miles of hiking and biking trails through weathered mine buildings and historic relics. The majestic peaks of The Canyons Resort are accessible for hiking through its gondola. The Rail Trail allows not only bikes, but horseback riders, joggers, and nature walkers. The route is 29 miles of public trail and connects all three Park City resort areas.

Ridge Trail 157 is a world-class single-track located in the heart of the Wasatch Range accessible from American Fork or Provo Canyon. This 14-mile ride requires a vehicle shuttle and is geared for advanced bikers. The trail begins at Pole Line Pass, which separates American Fork Canyon from Snake Creek Canyon and Utah Valley from Heber Valley. As the ride progresses and the Alpine Ridge recedes to the north, Mount Timpanogos dominates the skyline.

Old Ephraim's Grave Trail, Logan Canyon, is a 20-mile loop rolling through the northern Wasatch Range hinterlands, following dirt roads, jeep roads, and a touch of singletrack. Although you won't be scaling entire mountains, total vertical gain approaches 3,000 feet, so this route is best suited for "solid" intermediate riders. If you're looking for something more mellow, then wander along the nearby Logan River Trail. This wide dirt and gravel path lures bicyclist, runners, and pedestrians to mingle with the diverse ecosystem of the Logan River.

Wasatch Crest: Ask Salt Lake City mountain bikers what their favorite trail is and they will respond, emphatically, the Wasatch Crest Trail, for it is the premier mountain biking trail in the Wasatch Range. Along the Crest Trail, you'll climb through sun-dappled woods, cross luxuriant basins, and trace the "Backbone of Utah." There are steep hills to conquer, many miles to log, and tricky sections that require a full repertoire of bike handling skills. This 20-mile (out-and-back) trail highlights the Great Western Trail's midsection and is well suited for intermediate to advanced cyclists.

Excerpts courtesy Gregg Bromka, author of *Mountain Biking Utah*.

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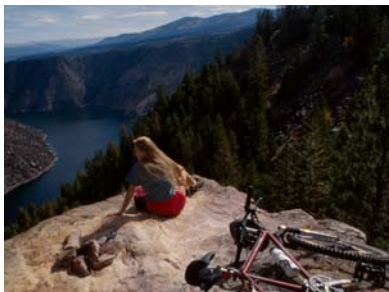
Websites

utah.com/bike Official state tourism online resource for trail maps, outfitters and guides, lodging and accommodations.

utahmountainbiking.com Comprehensive statewide listing of trail maps and rides, including bookstore and bike maintenance tips.

cyclingutah.com Best listing of bicycle shops, tours, festivals, races and events, including trail maps, forums and advocacy groups.

bicycletutah.com Resource for locating outfitters/guides.



Taking in a break and a view of Flaming Gorge



Negotiating the sheer cliffs of St. George's redrock country



The road out to Moab's Gemini Bridges



A family outing in Utah's High Uintas wilderness

Central Utah's High Plateaus

Harvey Trestle: This ride begins near the Holiday Inn on Westwood Blvd. off the North Price/Exit 241 of US6. This route explores the terrain to the west of Price and passes sandstone spires, towering cliffs, and deep gorges, as well as petroglyphs, waterfalls, and a massive railroad bridge. The area's history is rich in mining and is near the route upon which Butch Cassidy made his getaway after robbing the Castle Gate Mine in 1897. This is a 28 mile loop which is classified as an advanced trail.

The **Kenilworth Loop Trail** begins in Price and turns around in the town of Kenilworth, home to one of the area's first coal mines. The quaint coal mining town is situated in a picturesque setting on the lower slopes of the Book Cliffs. Fourteen miles at an intermediate level, the loop begins and ends in downtown Price and traverses city streets and 4WD dirt roads.

The **Mytoge Mountain Trail** combines singletrack trails, jeep tracks, and paved roads on a 25-mile loop around this aquatic jewel of central Utah. Except for a few steep hills and one wild and technical descent, the loop caters to strong intermediate bikers. Embark from Fish Lake Resort—one of the west's great hand-hewn log lodges—and follow the Lakeshore Centennial Trail through sapling aspens huddled against the lake's edge.

Southern Utah's Canyon Country

Arches National Park: The 22 mile long paved scenic drive can be accessed at points along the way to shorten the ride. Enjoy scenes reminiscent of a surrealist adventure through the stage of a popular Saturday morning cartoon as you witness balanced rocks, sandstone arches and redrock pillars.

Bryce Canyon Area: Cycle the 17-mile main paved road in the park, or explore Dave's Hollow, Casto Canyon or Skunk & Badger trails in the vicinity for the fantastic redrock hoodoos unique to this area.

Canyonlands National Park: Famous for its mountain biking terrain, Canyonlands offers many days of pedaling through a sun-burnt strata with amazing views of canyons, buttes and pinnacle-filled basins.

Castle Valley Ridge, 39 miles from Price, Utah, is an Advanced Rider, 19 mile loop trail which is steep in places. Along the way there are outstanding views of the valleys 3,000 feet below, as well as the Book Cliffs and the San Rafael Swell to the east.

Capitol Reef National Park: Four designated roads throughout the park allow visitors to experience the splashes of colors via bike.

Gemini Bridges, 8.5 miles north of Moab, is a massive rock span that has been cleaved down the center into two parallel bridges. But what makes this ride so unique is that the trail dumps you on to their flat tops, where you peer over the edge into the 250-foot void of Bull Canyon.

Gooseberry Mesa: About 3 miles west of Zion National Park, the main dirt road that leads out the center of Gooseberry Mesa is a fine novice to intermediate ride -- 10 miles out-and-back and flat as a pancake. But recently, a new trail system has been developed that incorporates technical slickrock and bonafide singletrack.

Green Valley Trail: Located just west of St George, this ride is one big BMX course loaded with thrills and potential spills on a roller coaster of dirt. The six-mile trail begins with a stiff, one-mile climb up the north rim of the Gap, a narrow canyon enclosed by sheer sandstone walls. From the high point, the rusty ramparts of Snow Canyon State Park can be seen floating on the northern skyline, and the flesh-tone towers of Zion National Park rise in the distant east.

Hurrah Pass: Perfect for first time visitors to the Moab area and for families with children, you'll welcome the straightforwardness of good dirt roads and moderate hills. At 20 miles round trip, the final 3 mile climb to the pass is the only challenging stretch.

Poison Spider Mesa Trail: Next to Slickrock Bike Trail, Poison Spider Mesa should be at the top of any Moab biker's must-ride list. With eye-popping views, generous slickrock to be crossed, and one gnarly descent on the infamous Portal Trail, Poison Spider is a "no

Nine Mile Canyon has 50 miles of canyon roads that offer archaeological rock art sites at every turn. About 20 miles SE of Price, the canyon is famous for its prehistoric Fremont Indian ruins, petroglyphs and pictographs, and contains the largest concentration of ancient Indian rock art in North America. The various biking trails in the canyon pass old homesteads, working ranches and a lot of beautiful scenery, in addition to rock art everywhere!

The **Swasey's Beach Trail** follows the Green River as it exits Desolation Canyon and offers outstanding views of the lower canyon as well as a sandy beach. At 18 miles each way, the trail offers challenge for novice to intermediate.

Temple Mountain: Located 15 miles west of Green River and conveniently crossed by Interstate 70, the San Rafael Swell is a redrock wilderness that boasts national-park-caliber scenery but without the crowds. The 10-mile loop around Temple Mountain is a good intermediate ride following jeep roads throughout.

The **Wedge Overlook trail** in the San Rafael Swell provides access to one of the best scenic vistas in the state. This trail features a good easy 3-mile ride for families, a more challenging 7-mile intermediate ride and a lengthy 18-mile advanced ride.

Excerpts courtesy Gregg Bromka, author of *Mountain Biking Utah*.

holds barred" kind of ride. The loop version is about 14 miles and is reserved for advanced bikers, based on the dicey Portal Trail descent. The out-and-back option is about 12 miles and well suited for intermediates.

Right Fork Bunker Creek Trail begins at a dizzying elevation of 11,307 feet atop Brian Head Peak and ends 14 miles later at Panguitch Lake, after a 3,000-foot descent. Most of the route follows singletrack, first along a breezy ridge then down a thickly wooded, creek-fed valley. The last few miles follow a jeep road loaded with whoop-te-does that can kick up the rear tire of an unsuspecting biker. This ride requires a vehicle shuttle between Brian Head Peak and Panguitch Lake; otherwise, you'll face over 10 miles of paved roads and 3,000 feet of climbing.

Slickrock Bike Trail: The trail that made Moab the center of the mountain biking universe needs no introduction. First developed by motorcyclists in 1969, this trail boasts over 100,000 visitors per year and treats cyclists to 12 miles of petrified sand dunes and fantastic formations. With a surface more closely resembling coarse sandpaper, the trail grips tires allowing for extreme vertical climbs.

Powell Point: Located 23 miles northeast of Bryce Canyon National Park via UT 22, the 4-mile ride to Powell Point in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is every bit as enjoyable as the staggering view gained from the turnaround. The initial double-track rolls through damp, muffled forests across the Table Cliff's broad, 10,000-foot summit. In the distance, the down-cutting temperament of the Escalante River and its tributaries are revealed in the chaotic and deeply furrowed canyons of Box-Death Hollow Wilderness. The Point (actually a giant peninsular table cliff plateau) resembles the bow of an ocean liner crashing through a sea of white, pink, and salmon hued breakers.

The **Twisted Forest** evokes childhood fairy tales of foreboding woodlands where spell-bound country folk spent eternity. Twisted it is because the forest harbors large communities of bristlecone pines, which are believed to be the oldest living organisms on earth. The 12-mile ride (out-and-back) is ideal for novice bikers and follows hard-packed dirt roads throughout. Stronger riders can tack on a few extra miles to reach High Mountain and a magnificent overlook of Cedar Breaks National Monument.

Zion National Park: Pedal the scenic drive up Zion Canyon beneath sheer cliffs to Gates of the Virgin River Narrows—a watery corridor hemmed between 2,000-foot-high sandstone walls! Or take Pa'rus Trail; an interconnecting trail in the park, about 3.5 miles long, which allows bicyclists to safely ride throughout the park connecting the lower canyon with the scenic drive.

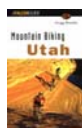
Excerpts courtesy Gregg Bromka, author of *Mountain Biking Utah*.

Guidebook Resources

Mountain Biking Utah, Gregg Bromka

Mountain Biking St. George/Cedar City, Bruce Grubbs

Mountain Biking Moab, David Crowell



Mountain Biking Utah's Wasatch Front, Gregg Bromka

Mountain Biking Park City & Beyond, Gregg Bromka

* available at major online bookstores, utah.com or 801-538-1398